

St Laurent Studio YSL 665 T

RENATA SCOTTO vol. 1



“As Hunter College is only a few blocks away from the Metropolitan Opera in Manhattan, Renata Scotto had no great physical distance to traverse in order to present this recital after a run of appearances in LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR. By contrast, the repertoire presented here covers a time span of some 250 years and corresponding styles ranging from the early Baroque through the Classical, bel canto, and the Romantic eras, although the emphasis throughout is weighted toward coloratura repertoire. Scotto is in prime form here, clearly inspired by an enthusiastic audience. While one could quibble about a few passing details - a couple of extreme high notes are a bit strident or not squarely in tune; her two Mozart arias are just a tad unstylish, savoring more of Verdi instead; the rapturous joy of the betrothed Elena in I VESPRI SICILIANI is a shade too decorous and subdued - it would be churlish to do so. Her interpretations are magnetic; the thoughtful use of dynamic shadings for expressive effects, including frequent forays into piano and pianissimo, are particularly striking and impressive. Her initial forays into Carissimi and Cimarosa are eminently tasteful and well sculpted, and she then finds in turn the regal dignity and fiery passion needed for Julia in LA VESTALE, the artfully artless simplicity and playfulness inherent in the Bellini and Rossini songs as well as ‘Stornella’ and ‘A vucchella’, and the rapt intensity required for Giselda’s prayer in I LOMBARDI. Pianist John Wustman, a regular Scotto recital partner, is an excellent accompanist throughout.

The monaural recorded sound has audible tape hiss but otherwise is clear and natural sounding. As usual, St. Laurent provides no texts or notes, though the back cover of the front tray card reproduces a yellowed clipping of the enthusiastic NEW YORK TIMES review of the concert. In sum, this is an enjoyable treat for fans of Scotto in particular and of great singing in a well-integrated recital program for vocal enthusiasts in general; cordially recommended.

This release can be obtained from Norbeck, Peters & Ford (Norpete.com).”

- James A. Altena, FANFARE